

**From:** Gary & Julie Downham  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: NBN Risk Assessment query  
**Attachments:** [image01.png](#)  
[image02.png](#)  
[image03.png](#)  
[image04.png](#)

Hi Julie

Thanks for your response and forwarding to the Minister's office.

I trust we will all have a great 2018 and that there will also be some improvement in certain areas.

FYI, I'm pretty sure that it was 2-years ago that I spoke to Optus about the black-hole issue. At the time they said that there was going to be some improvement with existing infrastructure or an additional tower installed. Your guess is as good as mine as to what happened with that!

Regards,

Gary

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**From:** McMullen, Julie (T. O'Brien, MP) [mailto:Julie.McMullen@aph.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 January 2018 2:53 PM  
**To:** 'Gary & Julie Downham'  
**Subject:** RE: NBN Risk Assessment query

Hi Gary

Thank you for your email in answer to the response from the Minister's Office. I absolutely appreciate your concerns regarding the unreliability of mobile phones as a back up to power failures which render land line telephones and medical alarms useless to those who live in the black spots of Buderim, and can understand your desire to be informed as to what the implications would be from any safety and service shortfall. As I am not an expert on the technical aspects of the NBN and would not like to misinform you, I have sent your further concerns to the Minister's office. I have confirmed in my email your advice that certain areas of Buderim have little or no mobile phone service and are notorious black spot zones, and in fact, we have had numerous complaints from constituents to this office. I have also confirmed that to date nothing has been done to alleviate the problem.

I will get back to you as soon as I have a response from the Minister's office.

Kind regards

**Julie McMullen** | Electorate Officer  
**OFFICE OF TED O'BRIEN MP**  
**FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FAIRFAX**

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**From:** Gary & Julie Downham [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Thursday, 18 January 2018 1:12 PM

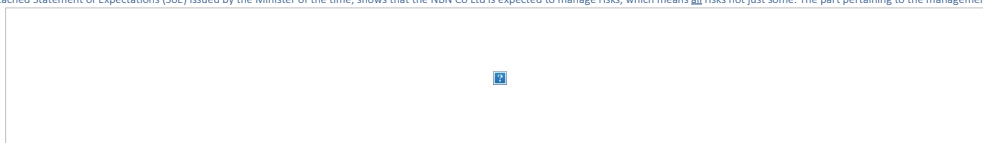
**To:** McMullen, Julie (T. O'Brien, MP)

**Subject:** RE: NBN Risk Assessment query

Hi Julie

Sorry for not responding earlier. At the time I received the forwarded response from the Minister's Office, I couldn't find any reference to any specific 'risk assessment' document(s) that I originally requested. Needless to say I was sapped of energy to bother following up at the time. No matter. I retired on 13/12/2017, so will continue to push for recognition/resolution of the safety and service shortfalls that currently exist.

The attached Statement of Expectations (SoE) issued by the Minister of the time, shows that the NBN Co Ltd is expected to manage risks, which means all risks not just some. The part pertaining to the management of risks is shown here:



Furthermore, there is evidence that the NBN Co Ltd is aware of these risk management obligations, as the attached 'Risk Management' document suggests, and, that they have made efforts to manage risks of their own employees, as the other attached document shows. However, by searching on the WWW I am unable to find evidence that the customers of the NBN Co Ltd have been included in the risk assessment process that the NBN Co Ltd apparently has. So I ask the question of the Minister again: "Where are the risk assessment documents?"

If not the NBN Co Ltd, then who is responsible and accountable for the new risks imposed on customers due to the implementation of the NBN? Has this fallen through the cracks?

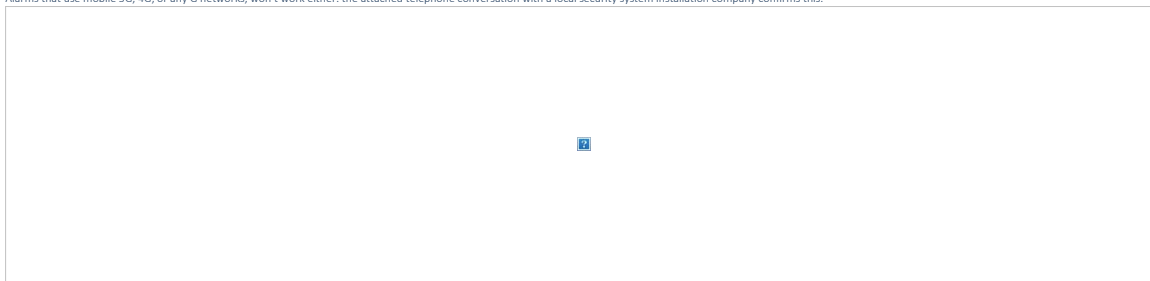
Without undertaking a risk assessment there is no method for establishing a quantifiable residual risk to ascertain whether it is acceptable or not. Ideally, we want zero risk. However, this may be impracticable such that a degree of risk has to be accepted but only when it has been quantified and deemed 'acceptable' according to the criteria outlined in the change management process for the NBN Project. I hope there is one!

In summarising the response from the Minister's Office, mobile phones/mobile networks appear to be touted as the solution to interruptions to NBN availability. Oh dear! What bright spark thought that up—I live in Buderim and cannot use my mobile phone in my house nor down the street!! I think the Minister and/or his predecessors needed to ensure that mobile network infrastructure was adequate for thorough network coverage around the populated areas of Australia before going ahead with NBN implementation. It is my belief that this would be an action from a risk/what if? review and assessment within a thorough and effective change management process. Do we have one?

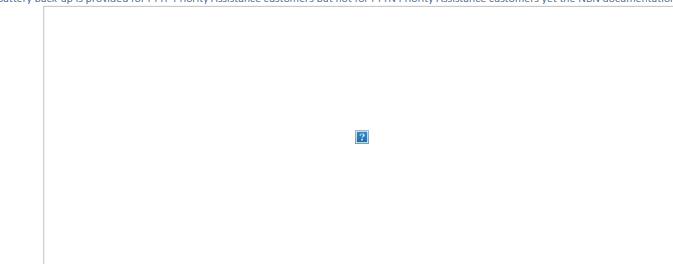
If communication over 3G/4G networks is supposed to be the proposed safety net for when the NBN doesn't work, then I along with many other voters have been let down and am forced to endure safety and security risks that weren't there before NBN implementation. Please ask the Minister to provide the timeline for when these risks will be mitigated. Perhaps you could forward the request to the Shadow Minister as well, since I have grave doubts that much will happen before we see the end of a few successive (I would really like to use the word 'successful' here) governments.

These are some of the flaws that are apparent to me, and many other customers, that require elevating for action and/or comment:

1. If you lose power because of one of many causes, e.g., vandalism (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fApyakfH7w>), storm, flooding of node, vehicle running into node, inability of utility to supply power etc., then the official solution is to use your mobile phone to dial 000 when you need emergency assistance. BUT YOU CAN'T if you don't have a mobile phone, whether you have the mental capacity to use one or not, or if the inadequate mobile network won't let you use one. Alarms that use mobile 3G, 4G, or any G networks, won't work either: the attached telephone conversation with a local security system installation company confirms this.



2. Before NBN, if someone with criminal intent pulled your fuses or cut your power to enter your home either to do you harm or steal your property, or both, you could use your landline to call for help, or, if installed, your security system would use the landline to alert those monitoring it. After NBN, for the reasons stated in 1. above, I consider the risks unacceptable, particularly for senior members of the community without mobile phones.
3. Battery back-up is provided for FTTP Priority Assistance customers but not for FTTN Priority Assistance customers yet the NBN documentation provided by the Minister says it's mandatory. Are FTTN customers expendable?



In anticipation of a thoughtful and complete response.

Yours sincerely  
Gary Downham

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**From:** McMullen, Julie (T. O'Brien, MP) [mailto:Julie.McMullen@aph.gov.au]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 12 September 2017 9:18 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** NBN Risk Assessment query

Hi Gary

I refer to your query in early July regarding whether or not a Risk Assessment process was carried out with regards to the nbn and those among us who do not own or use mobile telephones. I have had a response to my request on your behalf, and have copied the text from the email below. I hope it answers some of your questions.

*Thank you for your email to Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Minister for Communications and the Arts, on behalf of Mr Downham about power resiliency on the National Broadband Network (the network).*

*The Government is committed to ensuring consumer awareness about the operation of the network in a power outage and that associated battery backup considerations are clearly conveyed to consumers. nbn also includes information on these issues in its communications to consumers. Further information on the operation of the network during an emergency or power outage is available at: [www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/information-for-home/will-it-work-over-the-nbn/emergencies-and-outages.html](http://www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/information-for-home/will-it-work-over-the-nbn/emergencies-and-outages.html).*

*In late 2013, nbn completed a strategic review of the rollout and construction of the nbn network, including the use of alternate technologies. This strategic review recommended that nbn adopt a Multi-Technology Mix (MTM), incorporating existing broadband access networks. <http://www.nbnco.com.au/content/dam/nbnco/Documents/NBN-Co-Strategic-Review-Report.pdf>.*

*The advantage of the MTM approach is that using existing infrastructure allows nbn to rollout the network quickly and cost effectively, with less disruption to residents and neighbourhoods than constructing entirely new networks. The change to the MTM introduced a number of new broadband technologies into the network, including FTTP, FTTB and HFC – all with different power requirements.*

*For premises in areas scheduled to be served by nbn's fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) infrastructure, battery backup is mandatory for Priority Assistance customers. Priority Assistance arrangements are available to eligible customers with (or living with someone who has) a diagnosed life-threatening medical condition. For all other FTTP consumers, nbn provides a battery backup unit as an optional attachment. If an nbn-supplied battery backup unit's installed, it should last for approximately five hours during a power outage, provided that the battery has been properly maintained. The battery backup unit will not provide power to cordless phones, modems or computers.*

*In areas served by NBN's fibre-to-the-node or fibre-to-the-basement infrastructure (FTTN/B), there is no nbn-supplied network termination device in the consumer's premises, and therefore no nbn-supplied battery backup unit. The provision of backup power, such as a battery backup unit or generator, to any equipment inside a consumer's premises is therefore the responsibility of the consumer.*

*Why is battery back-up mandatory for FTTP Priority Assistance customers but apparently not for FTTN Priority Assistance customers?*

Some nodes in the FTN network utilise battery backup if the direct power supply to the node fails. However, while the network will remain accessible while those nodes are powered via battery backup, a consumer's ability to access the network would be dependent on having their own backup power source at their premises (such as a generator or backup battery).

In areas served by nbn's hybrid-fibre coaxial (HFC) infrastructure the provision of backup power, such as a battery backup unit, to any equipment inside a consumer's premises is the responsibility of the consumer.

Premises in the fixed wireless and satellite footprints can continue accessing the existing copper network under current Universal Service Obligation arrangements. Therefore consumers can choose to have their telephone service delivered over the existing copper network, if offered by their telecommunications retail service provider (RSP).

Where a customer is concerned about being able to seek assistance during a medical emergency, there are a number of medical alarm devices and services available in the market, many of which operate over a mobile network. These devices are typically powered by the alarm's internal battery and can therefore remain online in the event of a power outage. Customers may also wish to consider a solution such as a monitored medical alarm device (certified as compliant with Australian Standard AS4607-1999). AS4607-1999 devices are required to include a battery backup capacity of 36 hours in event of a power outage. Customers should take care to appropriately research and choose a product that best suits their specific needs. In most cases, alarm service providers should be able to fit a 3G module to an existing alarm unit. These modules are typically powered by the alarm's internal battery and can therefore remain online for the duration required by the relevant Australian Standard in the event of a power outage. Alarm service providers will be able to provide advice on how to safely migrate medical alarms.

Monitored medical alarms can be registered on nbn's Medical Alarm Register. The Register helps identify households with medical alarms, where support may be needed to assist in the move to the network. nbn has a program of work to assist existing users of monitored medical alarms to safely migrate from Telstra's local access network in advance of disconnection. nbn has engaged a managed service provider who will work directly with medical alarm service providers to assist in the migration process. Further information is available by visiting [www.nbnco.com.au/medicalregister](http://www.nbnco.com.au/medicalregister) or by telephoning 1800 227 300.

Where the network is affected by an emergency, nbn will prioritise reconnecting essential services, such as hospitals, fire, police, emergency services as well as community infrastructure such as traffic management, sewerage, power and water utilities. It will also work to prioritise the reconnection of business services essential to community recovery, such as banks, petrol stations and supermarkets. Further information on the operation of the network during an emergency or power outage is available at: [www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/information-for-home/will-it-work-over-the-nbn/emergencies-and-outages.html](http://www.nbnco.com.au/connect-home-or-business/information-for-home/will-it-work-over-the-nbn/emergencies-and-outages.html).

Thank you for bringing Mr Downham's concerns to the Minister's attention. I trust this information is of assistance.

Kind regards

**Julie McMullen** | Electorate Officer

**OFFICE OF TED O'BRIEN MP**

**FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FAIRFAX**

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O'BrienT-EmailSignature edit (2)



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